Trial 1

Here is a story about the last few moments of a very close basketball game. Read the story, then answer the questions that follow.

On the Line

by Baxter Mitchell

I'm at the free-throw line in the last game of City League Basketball Finals. The

scoreboard says "Home: 40 Visitors: 41" in electric red, and we're the visitors. Our team is the Rabbits. We're playing against Randal's team, the Vipers. My dad is in the stands, and he's shouting "Eight out of ten, Jay!" I've been practicing free-throw shots all year, and last week I made eight out of ten shots, so he's really proud of me. The game clock says five seconds left in the game. If I make these two shots our team will win, because there's no way Randal's team can make two more baskets in five seconds.

The basket looks bigger and farther away than at the little court where Dad and

I practice. Five kids are lined up on either side of the basket in case I miss the second shot: three kids from Randal's team, including Randal, and two kids from mine. The ref, in his black-and-white striped shirt, palms the ball in his big hand, blows his whistle, and passes it to me. It bounces on the floor, I catch it, and now the whole game is in my hands.

The crowd is cheering, and Randal is looking at me with an alligator smile. He sticks his tongue out at me, and pats his head while rubbing the front of his jersey. But I'm not going to let him distract me. I put his stupid teasing out of my mind. I promise myself I'm going to make the basket anyway.

I take the first shot, and the ball bounces off the front of the rim. I can't believe I missed! Dad shouts, "Good shot, Jay! Right on the line!" but Randal's voice is louder in my ears. He's saying, "Ha! I knew you were going to miss. You're the worst player on your team!" The ref tells Randal to be quiet and then passes the ball back to me

for the second shot. At least if I make this one, the Vipers can only tie the game.

As I get ready to shoot, Randal puts his hands in his armpits and flaps like a chicken. I try to ignore him and I shoot the ball. The ball bounces crooked off the backboard. I miss the shot again! While I'm holding my head in my hands, the Vipers get the rebound\* and pass the ball down to Randal, who is going for the basket. Randal shoots, but one of my teammates fouls him. The ref blows his whistle. Oh no! Now Randal is going to the line, and if he makes both free throws his team will win! I'm mad at myself. All I had to do was make one shot.

Now Randal is on the free-throw line, and I'm the one standing ready to get the ball if he misses the second shot. I feel so angry. Should I make a face at him like he made at me? I look up at my Dad and he's still smiling. Why is he still smiling? I almost smile too, but I don't want to smile, so I clench my fists while Randal takes the shot.

Randal misses. I let out a big sigh, and the crowd cheers. The ref gives Randal the ball, and it's my last chance to stop him from tying the game. Should I taunt him? Should I tell him he couldn't make it if the basket was an inch away? I look up

at my Dad, and he's shouting, "Rebound! Rebound! Rebound!" Randal is dribbling the ball at the free-throw line, looking at me. He actually expects me to try to distract

him! But I'm looking for the rebound instead, and I'm smiling. "Rebound! Rebound! Rebound!"

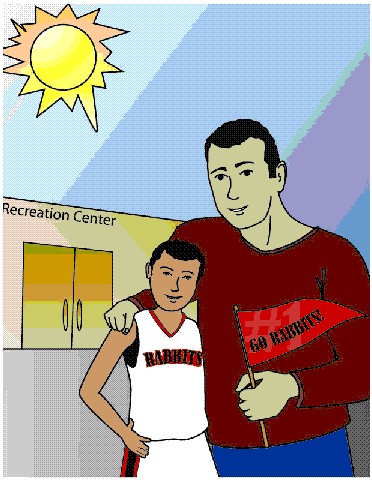
Randal misses again, and I box out the player next to me like my coach showed me, and I get the rebound. I pass the ball up to one of my teammates, and that's it! The buzzer sounds and we've won, forty-one to forty! The game's over! The crowd is cheering and my Dad is on his feet with his hands in the air.

As I walk up to the stands to celebrate with my Dad, I've never felt better. My

Dad hugs me and pats me on the back. "Good game, son," he says. "Nice rebound." I say, "I guess we need to practice my free throws some more, right Dad?" and

he smiles and gives me another hug.

\* rebound = in basketball, grabbing hold of the ball after a missed shot.



Item 1:

Part A

Read this sentence from paragraph 3:

The crowd is cheering, and Randal is looking at me with an alligator smile.

What does the expression an alligator smile reveal about Randal?

A. Randal is happy that Jay has the ball.

B. Randal is worried that Jay may score another point.

C. Randal’s smile makes him look mischievous.

D. Randal’s smile makes him look jealous.

Part B

How is Randal’s smile in paragraph 3 different from Jay’s smile in paragraph 7?

A. Randal’s smile is really meant to make fun of Jay, but Jay’s smile is a friendly expression.

B. Randal’s smile is meant to distract Jay, but Jay’s smile shows he is confident that he is playing well.

C. Randal’s smile is covering up his fear of Jay, but Jay’s smile is meant to show he has no fear.

D. Randal’s smile is intended to show his desire to be friends, but Jay’s smile is meant to cover his irritation with Randal.

Here is a passage about an African American inventor named Fred Jones. Although he was born more than a hundred years ago, his ideas still have an important effect on our lives today. Read the passage, then answer the questions that follow.

Fred Jones' Impossible Ideas

by Miriam Haines



Mmmm! Ice cream sure is good on a hot summer day! Eating summer fruits and

vegetables in winter is pretty nice, too. All year round you enjoy foods that travel many miles to reach you.

If you had lived in 1938, however, you would not have been so fortunate. Food that came by truck or train was packed with ice to keep it cold. The problem was, the ice soon melted. If a truck broke down or arrived late, eggs, meat, dairy products, and fresh produce would spoil.



Today, refrigerated trucks bring us a variety of fresh food all year long. Refrigerated trucks are usually large and have a very cold area for storing food—a little like a refrigerator on wheels. They bring us fresh food from around the world. Whom do we have to thank for this? A man with impossible ideas: a man named Frederick McKinley Jones.

Refrigerated trucks were Fred Jones' most famous idea, but they were by no means his only idea. During his lifetime, he perfected more than sixty inventions. Each time he came across a problem, he got to work thinking about how he could find a

solution. He did not mind if others said it could not be done. Few people have heard of this extraordinary inventor, but his ideas have improved life for all of us.

Fred Jones was born in 1893 in Kentucky. As a young boy, he was naturally curious. He was especially interested in machines. He loved to take things apart to see how they worked. Once, he took apart his father's prized watch. To Mr. Jones' relief, clever young Fred was also able to put it back together again.



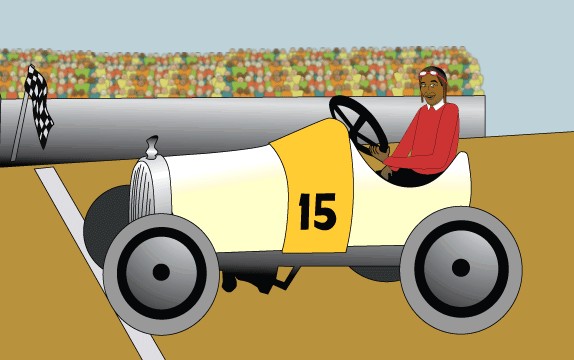
Although Fred loved learning, he was able to attend school for only four years. Sadly, while he was still a boy, he lost both his parents. He was forced to work to support himself. Luckily, he found a cleaning job at a garage where cars were repaired.

It was then that things began to change for the better. The garage was like heaven to young Fred. There he had the chance to see how large motors worked. While he swept the garage floor, he spent a lot of time watching the car mechanics at work. He also read everything he could about cars. In time, Fred became more expert than anyone else at the garage. Within three years, he was teaching others how to fix the cars and was promoted to foreman.

Fred amazed the other mechanics with his knowledge and ability. His favorite activity at the garage was working on racecars. He figured out how to make them go faster, and even built his own, using parts from other cars and tractors. When he could not find a part he wanted, he made it himself.

Once Fred built a racecar that he called Number 15. It was so well designed that it not only beat other automobiles, but even won a race against an airplane! Here is

what happened: When Fred finished building Number 15, he wanted to test it. A friend had just built an airplane from a kit, and Fred thought: Why not race the car against the plane? So the two friends held a race that was watched by hundreds of people. Fred's car could reach a speed of nearly 100 miles an hour. The airplane, 500 feet above the track, could go even faster. But Fred's car was much better at making turns. In the end, Number 15 won the race.



Fred went on to work in other places and with other types of machines. In each place, he grew more skilled. People often called his ideas "impossible," but Fred always made them work. While working at a movie theater, he created a ticket and change machine. Later, when the new "talking" movies came out, Fred's boss could not afford the new movie projectors. So Fred invented a movie projector that could play the new movies better than the more expensive projectors. Fred even worked on medical equipment. One doctor wished that his x-ray machine could be moved from patient to patient. Fred invented a portable x-ray machine that worked better than the ones doctors got from factories.

One day in 1938, Fred heard a businessman complain that his shipment of food had spoiled because the truck carrying the shipment had broken down. Fred thought he could help this man and others. He decided to build a truck refrigeration system. Everyone said it was an impossible task. After all, the trucks were large, the ride was very bumpy, and refrigeration would take up too much room. But these problems did not stop Fred. He built the refrigeration system out of strong but light materials. Instead of putting all the parts of the refrigeration system into one box, he divided the system in two. The heat-producing parts were put on the outside of the truck. The cold-producing parts were put on the inside. Fred's idea worked. Today, people around the world depend on his refrigeration systems. Fred's ideas were also used for keeping food cold on boats and airplanes. Without his brilliant ideas and determination, we would not have fresh food available to us from all over the globe.

Fred Jones won many awards for his inventions, including the National Medal of

Technology from the President, the highest honor an American inventor can receive.

Fred Jones was the first African American inventor to receive this honor. In 1977, he was admitted into the Minnesota Inventors Hall of Fame.

Although he had very little schooling, Fred Jones ended up making a big difference. How was he able to be so successful? If you asked Fred, he would probably give this advice:

1) Get lots of experience--try to do all kinds of work.

2) Learn all you can by reading, talking to people, and using libraries. (And today, he would probably advise using the Internet!)

3) Have confidence in yourself; even if no one believes in your ideas, know that anything is possible!

So the next time you enjoy ice cream on a hot summer day, remember Fred Jones, a boy with curiosity and imagination, who, as he grew older, never grew too old for impossible ideas.



Item 2:

Which best describes how the author organized the passage?

A. as a chronological review of Fred Jones’ life and achievements

B. as a comparison of Fred Jones’ life to the lives of other inventors

C. as an explanation of the effect of Fred Jones’

ideas on other inventors

D. as a set of detailed descriptions of Fred Jones’

most important inventions

Item 3:

The author says several times that Fred Jones was a man who did things people thought were impossible. Write an extended response that explains what the author means by this. Include details from the passage to support your answer.



Item 4:

Part A

Which sentence best explains a surprise result of Fred Jones’ first job?

A. He learned how to invent and repair race cars there.

B. He learned to take things apart and put them back together again.

C. It put him in a place to build on his natural ability to learn how things work.

D. It gave him the opportunity to come to know people who knew more than he did.

Part B

What evidence supports the answer to part A?

A. Fred decided to take apart his father's watch to see how it worked.

B. Fred was inspired to build a car to race against a plane.

C. Fred met people who taught him about different machines.

D. Fred watched the other mechanics and learned from them.

Item 5:

Part A

What is the main idea of the text?

A. People can invent anything that they want to with enough education.

B. Making life easier for people should be the goal of every inventor.

C. It is possible to be very smart without becoming famous.

D. Anyone who works hard can achieve great results.

Part B

Which sentence from the text best supports the main idea?

A. “Few people have heard of this extraordinary inventor, but his ideas have improved life for all of us.” (paragraph 4)

B. “Fred amazed the other mechanics with his knowledge and ability.” (paragraph 8)

C. “Today, people around the world depend on his refrigeration systems.” (paragraph 11)

D. “Have confidence in yourself; even if no one believes in your ideas, know that anything is possible!” (paragraph 13)

Item 6:

Part A

Read the following sentence from paragraph 4.

Few people have heard of this extraordinary inventor, but his ideas have improved life for all of us.

What is a synonym for the word extraordinary?

A. incredible

B. famous C. average D. busy

Part B

Which fact about Fred Jones helps in understanding the meaning of the word extraordinary?

A. He began his working life with a cleaning job at a garage.

B. He was naturally a very curious person who liked to understand how things work.

C. He believed in getting experience with all kinds of work.

D. He invented a portable x-ray machine that worked better than any factory-made machine.

Item 7:

Part A

Read this sentence from paragraph 7:

The garage was like heaven to young Fred.

How was the garage “like heaven” to young Fred?

A. It was a place to feel close to his father.

B. It was a place to play and have fun. C. It was a place with interesting work. D. It was a place to show off talents.

Part B

What phrase from paragraph 7 best helps in understanding the expression “like heaven”?

A. “things began to change for the better”

B. “the chance to see how large motors worked”

C. “swept the garage floor”

D. “became more expert than anyone else”